

The New Hampshire 2000 Survey

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NH SUPPORTS INCREASED FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

DURHAM, NH — New Hampshire residents understand the importance of the state colleges and universities to the economy of the state and believe that state support for the University System of New Hampshire should be increased.

These are the findings of the *New Hampshire 2000 Survey** conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. One thousand four (1004) New Hampshire residents were interviewed between June 16 and June 28, 2000. The potential sampling error for the survey is $\pm 3.1\%$. The *New Hampshire 2000 Survey*, is sponsored by the Business & Industry Association of New Hampshire, Fidelity Investments, the Library and Archives of New Hampshire's Political Tradition, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center, and the University System of New Hampshire.

THE IMPORTANCE OF USNH IN CHANGING ECONOMIC TIMES

The *New Hampshire 2000 Survey* was conducted during a time of great economic change in New Hampshire. The state's economy has been dramatically transformed over the last two decades and over this period, New Hampshire has outperformed its New England neighbors in a number of economic indicators. Currently, New Hampshire is 2nd in the nation in the percentage of its work force employed in high technology businesses. An important reason that New Hampshire has been so successful has been the education and skill level of workers and the ability of New Hampshire businesses to attract highly educated people to the state. New Hampshire's high tech success has resulted in a widening gap between the number of high tech jobs and candidates able to fill them. So too has the gap grown between state funding of public higher education and the institutions' needs. This presents an opportunity and a challenge for the colleges and university of New Hampshire – the institutions that will train the next generation of skilled workers in the Granite State.

MOST FAVOR INCREASED STATE FUNDING

The results of the *New Hampshire 2000 Survey* show that most New Hampshire residents believe the state should subsidize a higher proportion of the cost of higher education. Ten percent believe the state should pay three-quarters or more of the cost for students to attend a USNH institution (Keene State, Plymouth State, the College for Lifelong Learning, and the University of New Hampshire), 33% think the state should pay about half of the cost, 36% think the state should pay about one-quarter of the cost, 11% think the state should pay none of the cost, and 9% say they don't know what the state should pay. Currently, USNH derives 27% of its education and general budget from state appropriations.

"It's no secret that New Hampshire ranks last in the nation in state support of higher education," commented USNH Chancellor Stephen Reno. "The question now is, how can we begin to balance the scales and still maintain New Hampshire's low tax burden? The USNH Board of Trustees recognized that a lack of state dollars cannot continue to be recovered by increases in tuition and fees, and I believe the results of this survey are

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encouraging in this regard. What they show is a New Hampshire populace that values its University System and believes it is worthy of increased investment. And as a recently released report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education shows, affordability of its colleges and university is a major challenge for the state.”

The residents of New Hampshire understand the importance USNH to businesses and the economy of New Hampshire. Three-quarters of Granite Staters (74%) believe that USNH is very important to businesses and the economy of New Hampshire, 22% think USNH is somewhat important. Only 2% think USNH is not important, and 1% don’t know.

The *New Hampshire 2000 Survey* shows that public higher education is indeed a concern to many New Hampshire residents. In a break from New Hampshire’s reputation of fiscal conservatism, residents are willing to put their tax dollars behind USNH. Nearly half (46%) say they are willing to have their taxes raised to increase support for public higher education. And support for higher taxes for higher education comes from across the political spectrum – 51% of Democrats say they are willing to pay higher taxes to increase state support for higher education in New Hampshire as do 46% of Republicans and 41% of Independents.

State residents also believe that USNH institutions are important to them, personally. Forty-one percent believe that USNH institutions are very important to them personally, 33% think they are somewhat important, 16% think they are not too important, 9% think they are not important at all, and 1% don’t know.

USNH ALUMNI AND FUTURE STUDENTS

USNH has high support among New Hampshire residents in part because so many households have direct relationships with one of the USNH colleges. More than one-third of New Hampshire households say that someone in their immediate family graduated from one of the USNH institutions; 22% from UNH, 5% from Keene State College, 3% from Plymouth State, 1% from the College for Lifelong Learning, and 3% from more than one of these institutions.

Another important constituency of USNH are the children of New Hampshire residents. Forty percent of New Hampshire households have one or more children under the age of 18 and nearly a third of these households (31%) say that one of their children is likely attend one of the USNH institutions.

Importance of Public Higher Ed to NH Economy

	<u>Percent</u>
Very important	74
Somewhat important	22
Not too important	2
Not important at all	0
Don’t know	1

(N=1001)

Importance of Public Higher Ed to You, Personally

	<u>Percent</u>
Very important	41
Somewhat important	33
Not too important	16
Not important at all	9
Don't know	1

(N=1002)

How Much Should NH Subsidize Cost of Public Higher Education

	<u>Percent</u>
None at all	11
About 25%	36
About 50%	33
About 75%	5
All of the cost	5
Don't know	9

(N=996)

Willing to Have Taxes Raised to Increase State Support for Public Higher Education?

	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	46
No	48
Don't know	6

(N=999)

USNH Grad in Immediate Family

	<u>Percent</u>
UNH	22
Keene State	5
Plymouth State	3
CLL	1
Combination	3
No USNH grad in family	64
Don't know	2

(N=996)

**College Child is Most Likely to Attend
(Households with Children)**

	<u>Percent</u>
UNH	26
Keene State	2
Plymouth State	2
Other NH College	15
College Outside NH	20
Don't know	36

(N=404)

NH 2000 Survey Methodology

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A random sample of 1004 New Hampshire adults was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 3.1 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households.

In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.